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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications via a communications network, comprising:

a communications function that effects an advertisement download communication link between the client device and an advertisement distribution server system via the communications network, at selected advertisement download times;

an advertisement download function that downloads advertisements identified in a playlist(s) generated by at least one playlist server, via the advertisement download communication link, at the selected advertisement download times;

an advertisement storage function for storing the downloaded advertisements on a storage medium associated with the client device; and

an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the stored advertisements; and

wherein the communications network comprises the Internet; and

wherein the advertisement distribution server system includes:

a plurality of ad servers, each of which stores one or more of the advertisements to be downloaded, each advertisement being stored in a storage location designated by a URI;

the at least one playlist server; and

wherein the playlist(s) contains a list of ad identifiers and corresponding URIs that identify respective ones of the advertisements to be downloaded, and the corresponding storage location from which each respective advertisement can be fetched; and

wherein the advertisement download function includes:

a client device playlist identification function that transmits an identification of a current playlist(s) currently being used by the client device to the at least one playlist server at prescribed playlist check intervals, wherein the at least one playlist server responds either by transmitting to the client device an indication that the current playlist(s) is valid and does not need to be augmented, or by transmitting to the client device a new playlist(s); and

a playlist comparison function that compares the ad identifiers listed in the current playlist(s) with the ad identifiers listed in the new playlist(s), and that generates a list of URIs of the advertisements corresponding to the ad identifiers in the new playlist(s) that are different from the ad identifiers in the current playlist(s); and

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an ad fetch function that fetches the advertisements corresponding to the generated list of URIs from the appropriate one(s) of the plurality of ad servers, over one or more advertisement download sessions.

2.-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently amended) Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications via a communications network, comprising:

a communications function that effects an advertisement download communication link between the client device and an advertisement distribution server system via the communications network, at selected advertisement download times;

an advertisement download function that downloads advertisements identified in a playlist(s) generated by at least one playlist server, via the advertisement download communication link, at the selected advertisement download times;

an advertisement storage function for storing the downloaded advertisements on a storage medium associated with the client device; and

an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the stored advertisements; and

~~The software as set forth in Claim 1,~~ wherein the advertisements comprise advertisement files each of which includes an advertisement and a plurality of ad display parameters associated with that advertisement; and [(.)]

wherein the advertisement display function displays the stored advertisements according to the ad display parameters; and

wherein the ad display parameters include, for each of prescribed ones of the at least selected ones of the plurality of stored advertisements, any one or more of the following parameters:

a maximum face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed each time that it is displayed;

a maximum cumulative face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the maximum number of times per day that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the start date/time before which the associated advertisement should not be displayed; and

the end date/time after which the associated advertisement should not be displayed;

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wherein the face time comprises a time period during which a prescribed minimum level of user activity occurs.

26. (Currently amended) Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications via a communications network, comprising:

a communications function that effects an advertisement download communication link between the client device and an advertisement distribution server system via the communications network, at selected advertisement download times;

an advertisement download function that downloads advertisements identified in a playlist(s) generated by at least one playlist server, via the advertisement download communication link, at the selected advertisement download times;

an advertisement storage function for storing the downloaded advertisements on a storage medium associated with the client device; and

an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the stored advertisements; and

wherein the advertisements comprise advertisement files each of which includes an advertisement and a plurality of ad display parameters associated with that advertisement; and

The software as set forth in Claim 25, wherein the advertisement display function displays the stored advertisements according to the ad display parameters; and [[.]]

wherein the ad display parameters include, for each of prescribed ones of the at least selected ones of the plurality of stored advertisements, any two or more of the following parameters:

a maximum face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed each time that it is displayed;

a maximum cumulative face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the maximum number of times per day that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the start date/time before which the associated advertisement should not be displayed; and

the end date/time after which the associated advertisement should not be displayed;

wherein the face time comprises a time period during which a prescribed minimum level of user activity occurs.

27.-36. (Canceled)

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37. (Currently amended) Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications via a communications network, comprising:

a communications function that effects an advertisement download communication link between the client device and an advertisement distribution server system via the communications network, at selected advertisement download times;

an advertisement download function that downloads advertisements identified in a playlist(s) generated by at least one playlist server, via the advertisement download communication link, at the selected advertisement download times;

an advertisement storage function for storing the downloaded advertisements on a storage medium associated with the client device; and

an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the stored advertisements; and

~~The software as set forth in Claim 1,~~ wherein the playlist(s) includes ad display parameters that include, for each of prescribed ones of the at least selected ones of the plurality of stored advertisements, any one or more of the following parameters:

a maximum face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed each time that it is displayed;

a maximum cumulative face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the maximum number of times per day that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the start date/time before which the associated advertisement should not be displayed; and

the end date/time after which the associated advertisement should not be displayed;

wherein the face time comprises a time period during which a prescribed minimum level of user activity occurs.

38. (Currently amended) Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications via a communications network, comprising:

a communications function that effects an advertisement download communication link between the client device and an advertisement distribution server system via the communications network, at selected advertisement download times;

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an advertisement download function that downloads advertisements identified in a playlist(s) generated by at least one playlist server, via the advertisement download communication link, at the selected advertisement download times;

an advertisement storage function for storing the downloaded advertisements on a storage medium associated with the client device; and

an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the stored advertisements; and

~~The software as set forth in Claim 1,~~ wherein the playlist(s) includes ad display parameters that include, for each of prescribed ones of the at least selected ones of the plurality of stored advertisements, any two or more of the following parameters:

a maximum face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed each time that it is displayed;

a maximum cumulative face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the maximum number of times per day that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the start date/time before which the associated advertisement should not be displayed; and

the end date/time after which the associated advertisement should not be displayed;

wherein the face time comprises a time period during which a prescribed minimum level of user activity occurs.

39.-64. (Canceled)

65. (Original) Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications via a communications network, comprising:

a playlist fetch function that fetches a playlist(s) from a playlist server, wherein the playlist(s) identifies advertisements to be fetched;

an ad download function that downloads the advertisements identified in the playlist(s) from an advertisement distribution system, via the communications network, during one or more advertisement download sessions;

an advertisement storage function for storing the downloaded advertisements on a storage medium associated with the client device; and

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an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the stored advertisements on a display associated with the client device[.]; and

wherein the playlist(s) includes ad display parameters that include, for each of prescribed ones of the at least selected ones of the plurality of stored advertisements, any one or more of the following parameters:

a maximum face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed each time that it is displayed;

a maximum cumulative face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the maximum number of times per day that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the start date/time before which the associated advertisement should not be displayed;

the end date/time after which the associated advertisement should not be displayed; and

wherein the face time comprises a time period during which a prescribed minimum level of user activity occurs.

66. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) contains a list of ad identifiers that identify respective ones of the advertisements to be fetched.

67. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 66, wherein the playlist(s) further contains a list of source addresses where respective ones of the advertisements to be fetched can be fetched.

68. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the advertisement distribution system includes:

at least one ad server, each of which stores at least one of the advertisements to be downloaded; and

the at least one playlist server.

69. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 68, wherein the software is subsidized by revenues attributable to the downloaded advertisements.

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70. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 68, wherein the at least one ad server comprises a plurality of ad servers that each store at least one of the advertisements to be downloaded.

71. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 68, wherein:
the at least one playlist server is controlled by a vendor of the software; and
the at least one ad server comprises a plurality of ad servers that each store one or more advertisements to be distributed to clients of the vendor of the software; and
at least one of the plurality of ad servers is controlled by the vendor of the software.

72. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 68, wherein:
the at least one playlist server is controlled by a vendor of the software; and
the at least one ad server comprises a plurality of ad servers that each store one or more advertisements to be distributed to clients of the vendor of the software; and
at least one of the plurality of ad servers is controlled by an entity other than the vendor of the software that has granted the vendor of the software and its clients access to its ad server(s).

73. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the advertisement distribution system includes:
a plurality of ad servers, each of which stores one or more of the advertisements to be downloaded, each advertisement being stored in a storage location designated by a URI;
the at least one playlist server.

74. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 73, wherein the playlist contains a list of ad identifiers and corresponding URIs that identify respective ones of the advertisements to be downloaded, and the corresponding storage location from which each respective advertisement can be fetched.

75. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 74, wherein the ad download function includes:
a client device playlist identification function that transmits an identification of a current playlist(s) currently being used by the client device to the at least one playlist server at prescribed

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playlist check intervals, wherein the at least one playlist server responds either by transmitting to the client device an indication that the current playlist(s) is valid and does not need to be augmented, or by transmitting to the client device a new playlist(s); and

a playlist comparison function that compares the ad identifiers listed in the current playlist(s) with the ad identifiers listed in the new playlist(s), and that generates a list of URIs of the advertisements corresponding to the ad identifiers in the new playlist(s) that are different from the ad identifiers in the current playlist(s); and

an ad fetch function that fetches the advertisements corresponding to the generated list of URIs from the appropriate one(s) of the plurality of ad servers, over one or more advertisement download sessions.

76. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 75, further comprising an ad deletion function that deletes from storage on the client device all advertisements corresponding to the ad identifiers in the current playlist(s) that are not contained in the new playlist(s).

77. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 75, further comprising a playlist merge function that merges the current playlist(s) and the new playlist(s).

78. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein each advertisement download session is limited to a prescribed maximum time duration.

79. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the ad download function further includes an ad fetch timer function that limits the duration of each advertisement download session to a prescribed maximum time period.

80. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) includes ad display parameters that specify, for each of prescribed ones of the at least selected ones of the plurality of stored advertisements, how many times that advertisement is to be displayed for a given time period, and how long that advertisement is to be displayed each time that it is displayed.

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81. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) includes ad display parameters that specify, for each of prescribed ones of the at least selected ones of the plurality of stored advertisements, how many times that advertisement is to be displayed for a given time period.

82. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) includes ad display parameters that specify, for each of prescribed ones of the at least selected ones of the plurality of stored advertisements, how long that advertisement is to be displayed each time that it is displayed.

83. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) includes ad display parameters that specify, for each of prescribed ones of the at least selected ones of the plurality of stored advertisements, a start date/time before which the associated advertisement should not be displayed, and the end date/time after which the associated advertisement should not be displayed.

84. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) includes ad display parameters that specify, for each of prescribed ones of the at least selected ones of the plurality of stored advertisements, the total/cumulative amount of time that advertisement is to be displayed.

85. (Canceled)

86. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) includes ad display parameters that include, for each of prescribed ones of the at least selected ones of the plurality of stored advertisements, any two or more of the following parameters:

a maximum face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed each time that it is displayed;

a maximum cumulative face time that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the maximum number of times per day that the associated advertisement is to be displayed;

the start date/time before which the associated advertisement should not be displayed; and

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the end date/time after which the associated advertisement should not be displayed;
wherein the face time comprises a time period during which a prescribed minimum level
of user activity occurs.

87. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, further comprising a cookie generator function that generates a cookie containing information relating to user/client device behavior and/or user demographics, and that transmits the cookie to the at least one playlist server.

88. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 87, wherein the playlist(s) is generated by the at least one playlist server based at least partially on the cookie.

89. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) is customized to the user.

90. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) is tailored to the user.

91. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) is generated by the at least one playlist server based at least partially on user demographics and/or user/client device behavior.

92. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the at least one playlist server is controlled by a vendor of the software.

93. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the software is e-mail software.

94. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) is generated by the at least one playlist server based at least partially on user demographics.

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95. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the playlist(s) is generated by the at least one playlist server based at least partially on user/client device behavior.

96.-99. (Canceled)

100. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the advertisement display function effects display of the plurality of stored advertisements when the client device is offline.

101. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the client device is configured for communications with a multiplicity of other client devices via the communications network.

102. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 101, wherein the communications network is the Internet.

103. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 101, wherein the advertisement display function effects display of the plurality of stored advertisements when the client device is offline.

104.-106. (Canceled)

107. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, further comprising an installer function for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium.

108. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, further comprising an installer function for installing the software on the client device.

109. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 65, further comprising an installer function for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium associated with the client device.

110.-119. (Canceled)